aesthetic Mrs. Gereth becomes ironically a phiitstine In her ovsr-enthusiasm to save art.

In this dispute between a presumptuous aesthetician and an unfeeling barbarian over the spoils of Poynton, the mediator is a morally deluded girl, Fleda Vetch. Fleda's readiness to mediate between the mother and son is born cut of a moral and spiritual presumption that she is wsll equipped to deal with the problem. Fleda sets for herself certain delusive standards of moral excellence devoid of a proper relation to real life, and endeavours to live up to them. This leads her to a false altruism which demands cf her a foolish self-sacrifice and results in her being defeated and deserted.

In her over-keenness to be altruistic and just, Fleda neglects the reasonable claims of a just self, and thus becomes guilty of moral delusion. If in Mrs. Gereth and Mona selfishness leads to an aggre-ssive assertion of the claims of the self, false altruism leads Fleda to a total neglect of the self, and the result is a distortion of the self in all of them. By erasing the image of the self. Fleda erases her own identity and individuality, and thereby undermines her own happi-ness. Lacking in self-knowledge, Fleda flees from her 'self out of a mistaken .notion of moral propriety. It is moral delusion arising from a presumptuous moral egotism which blinds Fleda to the reality of the 'self'.[1] It is ironical that while Fleda is appalled by the greed and selfishness of others, she herself is appalling because of her moral and spiritual egotism. True human refinement consists in the avoid-ance of the two extremes of unfeeling selfishness and self-centred altruism, and in acquiring, instead, an essential knowledge of the self which is neither endangered by an ignorance of the world, nor enslaved by the experience of its own selfhood.

In *What Maisie Knew,* Henry James further explores the dangers which a society without refinement offers its individuals. The exposure of the young and innocent to the contagion of moral corrup-

tion in society results in their being morally seduced and depraved.

Little Maisie grows up in a social world, in which men and women have subordinated values to egotism, lust, and materialism. Such important relationships as those between husband and wife, and parents and children are perverted by the selfish whose sole aim is the gratification of their passions and desires. Men and women (Teltgttt in irregular sexual relationships, and their unfortunate children